City of Lafayette Staff Report

For:	City Council
By:	Leah C. Greenblat, Transportation Planner
Date Written:	October 7, 2008
Meeting Date:	October 14, 2008
Subject:	Comments on Contra Costa Transportation Authority's Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update's Issues and Options Paper

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Introduction / Discussion

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) is in the early stages of updating its 2003 Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. In preparation for that update, the CCTA produced an Issues and Options Report in order to facilitate feedback from jurisdictions and the public. Due to the length of the document, it has not been included in your agenda packet. The report is available at the City Offices or on the CCTA's web site (http://ccta.net/pedestrian/ccbpupdate.shtml). Both Lafayette's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and the Circulation Commission have reviewed the Issues and Options Report. For the Commission's review, staff prepared a staff report with a table of comments which the Commission supported and recommended forwarding, with minor modifications, to the Council for incorporation in an official City comment letter to the CCTA. The Commission also received an e-mail from Commissioner Lynn Hiden. While the Commission did not agree with all of her comments, the Commission wished to forward Commissioner Hiden's comments to the CCTA as correspondence received on the matter. Staff prepared a draft comment letter, attached, incorporating the Commission's recommendations.

Fiscal Impact

None.

Recommendation

1. Forward comment letter to the CCTA.

Attachments

1. Draft City of Lafayette comment letter to the CCTA regarding the Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update Issues and Options Report
2. October 6, 2008 email from Circulation Commissioner Lynn Hiden

c:\users\lgreenblat\documents\leah's work files\circulation commission\reports to council\2008\ccta bike-ped plan issues and options rpt.doc

10M

October 7, 2008

Brad Beck, Senior Transportation Planner
Contra Costa Transportation Authority
3478 Buskirk Ave., Suite 100
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Dear Mr. Beck:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the July 30, 2008 Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update's Issues and Options Report. The City of Lafayette's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and Circulation Commission discussed and reviewed the document and the city Council authorized sending this letter at its October 14, 2008 meeting. The City received one piece of correspondence, attached, regarding this report which we are including for your information. The following table contains the City of Lafayette's official comments on the Issues and Options Report.

City of Lafayette Comments on the July 30, 2008 Draft of the Issues and Options Paper for Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update			
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1.	Thru-out	Use of the terms "design standards and guidelines" and best practices	Careful evaluation and description of the use and meaning of these terms. It would seem inapprorpriate for the CCTA to develop its own design standards which a jurisdiction would have to abide by given existing Caltrans' requirements. Providing guidelines, a resource list and examples of best practices where existing standards may not provide sufficient detail would be a more appropriate role for the CCTA.
2.	Page 9	Presentation of data collected.	Matrix preferred.

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3.	11	Goals and Policies	Given the diverse range of needs and desires throughout the county, flexibility to tailor these to fit all jurisdictions needs to be retained.
4.	11	Proposed Vision Statement	Overall, the statement seems too long. The statement should recognize that in some situations, bicycling and walking are viable alternatives to driving a motorized vehicle. A joint funding application may not warrant designation as a high-priority. Coordination between jurisdictions is vital, but priority linkages on the network should be a far greater determinant than whether a joint funding application is submitted. Lafayette has already received grant funding to implement way-finding signage for bicyclists. Lafayette has initially selected to use the City of Berkeley's model.
5.	12	Pedestrian Districts	How will defined pedestrian districts be used in the plan? Add office uses to item #1. Modify #4 to read pedestrian-scale *and oriented* buildings. #6 Additional descriptive information is needed on the desired intent of this item.
6.	12	Goal 1	Limited right-of-way and topography should be recognized as a significant barrier to implementing projects.
7.	14	Action 1.1.5	Additional methods of support would be to provide examples and references for conditions of approval that support TDM, transit and other non-motorized infrastructure.
8.	15	Action 2.1.1	Where is the funding coming from and who would be responsible for maintaining a collision data program?

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9.	15	Action 2.2.1	511 Contra Costa should also distribute information about *driving* safely in proximity to pedestrians, bicyclists and transit as well as walking and bicycling safely
10.	17	Action 3.2._	Provide examples of best practices to jurisdictions to ensure that traffic calming projects do not inhibit pedestrian and bicycle access and that projects result in facilities with improved pedestrian and bicycle safety.
11.	17	Action 3.2.1	Further clarification is needed about this action. The criteria for selecting projects for what needs to be effective and efficient…
12.	19	Goal 5	Roadways where bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited should also not create a safety barrier; for example, freeway on and off-ramps.
13.	20	Action 5.1.1	Clarify who would be the responsible party for reviewing CIP projects.
14.	20-21	Implement-ation Tools	Enforcement and education: currently local Traffic Commissioner does not support the use of "stings" Consider working with the EBBC and local jurisdictions to sponsor bike rides for less experienced riders (adult and family rides) to develop road skills and familiarity. Checklists will serve as very useful reminders when working on projects. The use of checklists, such as the Routine Accommodation Checklist, are common for other elements of plan review.
15.	25	Priority Corridors	It is unclear what is occurring and what is being proposed. Is a super-regional network now needed? What criteria is MTC using to select a subset of the Countywide network?
16.	26	Proposed Criteria	How will demographic and socioeconomic factors be collected (what's the source data) and how will it be used. Many bicyclists ride through or work in a jurisdiction but

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			do not live there. Origin as well as destination should be considered.
17.	27	Bicycle Latent Demand	Further explanation on the use of the results of the latent demand factors needs to be discussed. How would latent demand be used in selecting routes? Why these factors? What other factors could be considered? How does the map relate to which bicycle facilities you'd build? The latent demand maps seem like too course of a tool to make a decision from. How do you select routes from this data? It doesn't provide information on where people are going? How are key linkages accounted for that may go through lower density areas?
18.	28	Proximities	The greatest potential for reducing vehicle trips is for short distance destinations. Other land uses such as neighborhood commercial, shopping and entertainment should be considered as well as larger destinations.
19.	28-29	Criteria	The timing of the update of this plan and bike-ped plans of local jurisdictions are unlikely to coincide. If this plan selects projects (from within the updated plan) to receive Measure J funding, will and how would projects later identified by jurisdictions be considered and selected for this funding? Whether a project is a gap closure or improves an existing facility should not matter in terms of their scoring criteria. Gap closures and improvements to existing facilities potentially both generate important network projects worthy of funding. Cost/benefit and Barrier Elimination: Often times these barriers exist because a costly improvement is needed, so a cost/mile evaluation may not be helpful. A pinch point created by topography or lack of right of way may also be a barrier.

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20.	30-31	Maps	The two maps do not "illustrate what the application of these criteria …might look like." It shows an overlay of factors but it does not identify key linkages or help to prioritize those linkages. There is no emphasis on how you get from one area, through another area and to your destination. How are routes selected and where are the origins and destinations of the potential and existing network users? Are all of these factors considered equal? How are existing trails and other facilities factored in? What about planned capital and development projects? For example, the Lafayette Library and Learning Center is currently under construction and the City wants to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to that facility prior to its opening. A cursory review of the Pedestrian Facility Latent Demand map, leads us to question the validity of the output. In almost all of the factors considered, downtown Lafayette and its surrounding neighborhoods intuitively should have higher scores than the City of Orinda's downtown, yet Lafayette's downtown and surrounding neighborhoods appears to score lower.
21.	32-33	Bike and Ped. High Complexity Projects	It is incorrect to assume that high complexity projects are always longer-term and to be handled via policy changes or development projects. That presumption potentially delays infrastructure improvements that may be needed now and of a high priority in establishing a functioning network. Based on the large size of funding requests for many grant projects that are currently competing for funds and ready to build now, complex projects should not necessarily by definition become longer-term projects. Countywide, local jurisdictions have made significant progress in implementing the less complex, inexpensive projects. Perhaps, these less complex, inexpensive bicycle projects should be funded primarily by local jurisdictions and therefore be considered lower priorities for county-wide funds. This may not be applicable for pedestrian

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			projects since they tend to be smaller in scale. Local jurisdictions need funding assistance for the larger more expensive projects as well as the smaller projects. Complex projects could also be broken up into phases. Complex, mid to long range projects might benefit from a feasibility or options analysis study.
22.	33	Pedestrian Complexity	Low complexity projects could also include striping and solar-powered improvements. Is "crosswalk lighting" overhead lighting or in-pavement flashing lights? Medium complexity projects should include retaining walls, piping drainage ditches and electrically-powered improvements. High complexity projects should include bridges.
23.	34	Advantages of the New Criteria	The arguments to use the new criteria are not very compelling. It is unclear "how many of the less tangible benefits of projects" are indeed considered based on the criteria presented. Additionally, jurisdictions with projects contained within this plan may apply for grant funding from a variety of sources with a variety of different and/or competing priorities. If a project is an important part of the Countywide network, it should be regardless of consideration of a particular grant funding source.
24.	35	Maps	Smaller commercial centers may also serve as popular pedestrian and bicycle destinations. Projects improving access to these centers potentially could reduce many short-distance vehicle trips.
25.	45	BPAC	The last bullet uses the term BPAC. What does that stand for? (Bicycle Policy Advisory Committee or Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee) Who is the CCTA's BPAC? Depending on who is on the BPAC, the expedited process described in the following paragraph might be a violation of the Brown Act.

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26.	46	Key Options	The first bullet point would benefit from some examples of how changes might help projects compete better for funding. Consider including guidelines or source references for bike parking at transit bus stops, transfer points, transfer centers and BART stations. Consider including a model bike parking ordinance including guidance on triggers for showers and lockers.
27.	47	Site Access Evaluation Checklist	Include bike parking signage.
28.	48	Traffic Impact Study Checklist	Include questions regarding what happens at the project's edge. How does it link to the existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle network?
29.	49-50	Safe Routes to School	Developing "recommended school safety projects" has been raised as a concern in Lafayette. Please provide some guidance on whether there may be a liability issue for either the school district or city associated with designating routes or preparing a school safety study. Locally, school districts have demonstrated only minimal support and interest in developing, implementing or maintaining safe routes to school programs. Higher priorities exist than using consultant resources to develop an appendix on recommendations for writing successful Safe Routes to School grant applications. This source of funding is very competitive due to the limited amount of funds available.
30.		General	The plan should refrain from making specific funding recommendations for projects for various individual funding sources. The plan should identify projects in terms of high, medium and low priority for the overall

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			functioning of the network. The plan could establish criteria to be used when evaluating a funding source controlled by the CCTA.
31.	50	Transit First	Unfortunately at this time, transit service is so limited in Lamorinda, a Transit First policy seems absurd.
32.	53	Key Options Model Policies	Model policies, best practices and guidelines would be most useful if kept and maintained on the Authority's web site. This will broaden the potential viewer audience. Instead of trying to serve as the ultimate reference source, given the CCTA's resources, it would be more useful to identify a handful of practices that support pedestrian and bicycle transportation the CCTA would like to implement over a five year timeframe and concentrate on those. Examples: coordinating wayfinding signage and bike parking ordinances

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Issues and Options Report. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Leah Greenblat, Transportation Planner, at 925.299.3229.

Thank you again for seeking our input.

Sincerely,

Mike Anderson
Mayor

Enclosure
cc: Circulation Commission

Greenblat, Leah

From: Lynn Hiden [dandlhiden@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, October 06, 2008 10:30 AM
To: Greenblat, Leah
Cc: LHC via YahooGroup; Ivor E. Samson
Subject: Comments, CCTA's COUNTY-WIDE Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update's Issues and Options Paper

Dear Leah, Commissioners, and BPAC,

Thank you for the amount of work that was required to do such an outstanding job on the matrix. I have just a few comments, below.

1. Page 2 of 8, staff report matrix, item 4, line 1 - Should that last word be "all-encompassing"?

2. Page 3 of 8, staff report matrix, item 14, para 2 - Delete reference to working with EBBC to develop road skills with less experienced riders. EBBC and its membership are engendering unprecedented wrath amongst Lafayette residents by their insistence on running red lights and STOP signs. They are giving bicycling a bad name. Until they reform their habits they are unsuitable, due to their flaunting of cities' laws, to teach inexperienced riders their road skills. They are not doing themselves any favors.

3. Page 12, main text, sidebar, item 3 per Pedestrian Districts: Who decides what is a pedestrian district in an area of mixed or dense land use and intense or potentially intense pedestrian activity, what is "right-sized (...not too small and not too large)" ??? Is this to be relative to the size of the city and its urban area? Or not. One size does not and should not fit all.

4. Page 21, main text, Benchmarking, bullet: Text states that benchmarks are specific targets that add accountability to a plan; text suggests "Achieve a 10% reduction in bicycle and pedestrian collisions on a per capita basis over the next 20 years".
State what numbers should be used as a baseline, since if bicycling numbers respond to the encouragement specified in this document, those who bike will increase dramatically. When use increases, accidents also increase, even on a per capita basis. We shouldn't be measuring against a baseline derived from very low usage.

5. Page 27, Bicycle Latent Demand - factors identified that have a measurable impact on the decision to bicycle...Please add ease of travel/connectivity between communities. Elsewhere, toward the end of the document, the question is posed, Is this plan too urban in emphasis? I think, Yes.

6. Matrix by subregional CCTA divisions, Southwest County Jurisdictions, Lafayette, item c, bullet 1: Please add Mt. Diablo Boulevard as one of our main on-street bikeways, existing or proposed (it has been omitted); and omit Hwy 24 (it has been added). We do not plan to place bike lanes on Hwy 24, I should hope.

7. Fehr & Peers draft map, Contra Costa County Overview, COUNTRYWIDE BIKEWAY NETWORK BY RTPC BOUNDARY-TRANSPAC --please add in green our Class 1 Lafayette Moraga Trail as it winds through Lafayette. It has been completely omitted.

8. " " ", SWAT TRI-VALLEY MAP, please add in green our Class 1 Lafayette Moraga Trail through Lafayette. It has been omitted.

Lynn Hiden